



Minutes Tempe Veterans Commission April 3, 2018

Minutes of the TEMPE VETERANS COMMISSION held on Tuesday, April 3, 6:00 p.m., at Valor on Eighth, 1001 East 8th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Keith Finkle, Chair
Mario Aguirre (telephonically)
William Blair
Lauren Hyre
Michelle Loposky
David Lucier
Stephanie Michael
Laura Skotnicki

(MEMBERS) Absent:

Troy Friedman, Vice-Chair
Patricia Little-Upah

City Staff Present:

Valerie Kime Trujillo, Human Services Deputy Director

Guests Present:

Wanda Wright, Director of Arizona Department of Veterans' Services
Miriam Norris, Save the Family Foundation of Arizona

Agenda Item 1 – Valor on Eighth Tour

The Tempe Veterans Commission toured Valor on Eighth from approximately 6:10 – 6:30

Agenda Item 2 – Call to Order

Chair Keith Finkle called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Agenda Item 3 – Public Appearances

Commission Member Laura Skotnicki introduced the Commission to Meera Norris. Meera reported Save the Family held a “meet and greet” at Valor last week and conducted a survey; results will be reported back to the Commission when they are available.

Agenda Item 4 – Presentation – Wanda Wright, Director of Arizona Department of Veterans’ Services

- 26 years/21-years National Guard Active
- 5 years in Air Force
- Retired 2011 from Military
- Vice President for Montessori School in Paradise Valley
- Governor Doug Ducey appointed in 2015
 - 400 employees
 - By VA Hospitals
 - State Veteran – 200 Phoenix Housing
 - State Veteran – 120 beds Tucson (2012)
 - Funded by Omnibus
 - 80 bed facility
 - Yuma and Flagstaff
 - \$685 million President Trump cleared the way
 - 52% in Maricopa County
 - 25% in Pima County
 - 25% across the state
- Main revenue source for Medical – VA
 - Skilled nursing home served by VA
 - Medicare & VA – some self-pay
- On books/budget for a home in Mohave County
 - Maybe Kingman
 - State pays 25%
 - VA pays 65%
- Veterans Service Division
 - Veteran benefits counselor 30
 - Claim injury/illness connect to service
 - Spousal
 - \$24m per month in 2015 to \$44m per month
- Veterans Benefit Counselors (VBC)
 - Best VBC as state
 - Approval rating of 85%
 - Virtual VBC – Northern Region use Skype or Webex
- Wanda offered to bring a computer to Valor on Eighth got the VBC outreach services
- Woman’s Programs – Exposure across the state
 - Woman’s Veterans Advisory Committees
 - Navajo and Hopi Nations
 - SRPMIC interested also

- Veterans donation fund \$1.5m license plates
 - Small grants – less than \$5000/projects

Agenda Item 5 – Strategic Plan Review – tabled for next meeting

Agenda Item 6 – Discussion of Change to Veteran’s Commission Ordinance

At the December 12th Veterans Commission meeting, the commission concluded that it is good to have Tempe residents, but that there were key organizations that needed to be represented because these organizations bring resources and services to the City of Tempe.

The Veterans Commission approved a request for a revision of the ordinance by the City Council to the following language:

- (a) There is hereby established the Tempe Veterans Commission to be composed of eleven (11) members. The commission will include a member from each of the following existing United States Military And Veteran Service Areas:

- (1) Arizona Coalition of Military Families;
- (2) Arizona Department of Veterans Services;
- (3) Pat Tillman Veterans Center at Arizona State University;
- (4) East Valley Veterans Education Center;
- (5) Phoenix Veteran's Administration Medical Center or other health and wellness organization;
- (6) Housing Advocacy and Assistance Specialist;
- (7) Supportive services agency (e.g. U.S. Vets or Save The Family);
- (8) ~~Returning military veteran with an honorable discharge within 3 years prior to the date of commission application~~ RETIRED OR PRIOR SERVICE UNITED STATES MILITARY VETERAN WHO RESIDES WITHIN THE CITY OF TEMPE;
- (9) Retired or prior service United States military veteran;
- (10) ~~Active United States military or reservist~~ AT LARGE MEMBER WHO RESIDES WITHIN THE CITY OF TEMPE;
- AND,
- (11) AT LARGE.

Next Steps:

If requested, ordinances amending the composition requirements of these two Commissions will be placed on an upcoming Regular Council Meeting agenda.

Agenda Item 7 – Calendar/Event Submissions

- Veterans Day Parade

Agenda Item 8 – Updates from Commission Member Mario Aguirre

- Flew Veterans from ASU to National Conference
- Large grant up to \$75,000 due October funded \$850,000
- Veterans Tool Kit through DES – Helped pay for anything that will be a barrier to employment – tools, clothes
- “Be Connected” – VA, State, ACMF Suicide prevention program.
 - Support line, crisis, relationship launched 2014 (Had 4 phone calls that month, now 400)
 - 1-866-4AZVets
- Roadmap to Veteran Employment
 - Become Veteran Supportive

- 3.9% unemployment rate for Veterans
- Veterans want to find careers instead of jobs

Agenda Item 9 – Future Agenda Items – ~~May 22, 2018~~ June 5, 2018

- Housing – Valor on Eighth
- Veteran Supportive Businesses
- East Valley Veterans Education Center Update
- Veterans Day Parade
- Strategic Plan
 - Worksheet submissions
- Speaker – Vice-Mayor Robin Arredondo-Savage
- “Be Connected” Presentation

Agenda Item 10 - Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at

Next meeting will be on ~~May 22, 2018~~ June 5, 2018

Minutes Prepared by: Valerie Kime Trujillo

Reviewed by: Valerie Kime Trujillo

Keith Finkle, Chair
Tempe Veterans Commission